

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Davis amendment.

The United States locks up a higher portion of its population than any country on Earth. And one of the contributing factors is the high rate of recidivism--people who get out of prison and then turn around, mess up, and return to prison.

Before the Second Chance Act of 2008, the Department of Justice's statistics reflected that about two-thirds of the offenders released from prison--two-thirds--were re-arrested within 2 years. Now that's down in some States to one-half. In my home State of Virginia, which has taken full advantage of the Second Chance Act and has enacted additional initiatives, the rate is down in the 30 percent range. So additional funding of this amendment will be very useful, and it shows that you can save money and reduce crime.

Now we need a lot more money than even this amendment would provide. Each year, 9 million individuals are released from jails, over 720,000 are released from State and Federal prisons, and they need a lot more assistance than even this amendment would do. But this amendment is a major step in the right direction. At least 95 percent of State prisoners will be released at some point, and they have a myriad of needs which, if unmet, will contribute to the risk of re-incarceration.

There are significant mental health problems that the Second Chance Act can address. Substance abuse is highly correlated with crime. Education--those who do not have adequate education will find themselves back in prison. And employment--those who, basically because they don't have an education, have trouble getting jobs, and having a felony record even exacerbates that problem. The Second Chance Act initiatives go a long way in helping. Basic secondary education, vocational training, and intense supervision all contribute to reductions in recidivism.

So, Madam Chair, if we are to lower crime rates, you can't think of a better investment than this amendment that we're considering today. We can save money and reduce crime and reduce victims. Please support the Davis amendment.